



**HEALTH &
SAFETY
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TACKLING WORKPLACE STRESS

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A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of several overlapping, diagonal, arrow-shaped bands pointing to the right. The bands are in various shades of red and maroon, creating a layered, 3D effect.

Work-related stress - HSE's Management Standards Approach

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Work shouldn't be like this..



Before Work



After Work

HSE's Health and Work Team

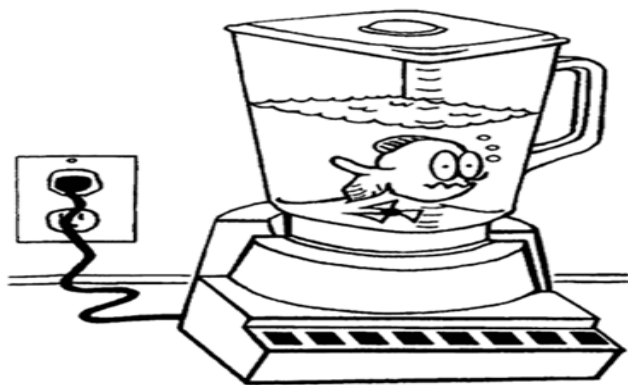
- HSE's new Health priority plan, launched September 2017
- Focusses on health topics, primarily:
 - Lung diseases;
 - Musculoskeletal Disorders; and
 - Work related stress
- Working with the DWP/DH Joint Work and Health Unit on the Government mental health agenda, advocating a preventative approach
- Similar contributions to the Farmer/Stevenson enquiry and the Government's Green Paper consultation process earlier in the year.

HSE's Health and Work Team, *cont.*



- Brings together associated topics such as MSDs, Work-related Stress, Occupational health
- Co-ordinated communications campaign to promote the need to consider the levels of risk to employees:
 - Lung Diseases Summit in November 2017;
 - Musculoskeletal Disorders Summit in March 2018; and
 - Go home healthy campaign and website
- Flexibility to bring in other 'health' topics such as noise and vibration
- Consistency of approach and communication as far as possible across health topics.

Questions



And you thought
there was stress
in your life !



STRESS RELIEF..

I understand that life at the top is extremely stressful. But if it makes you feel any better, it's pretty stressful at the bottom as well!



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What is stress?

- HSE defines stress as:
 - "The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them."
- Stress is not an illness itself, but if stress becomes excessive or prolonged, mental and physical illness may develop.
- Stress can hit anyone at any level of the organisation.
- Work related stress is widespread and not confined to particular sectors, jobs or industries although some sectors do have more than the average incidences of stress.

Why take action?

HSWA 1974 requires employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of **all*** their employees; and

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers:

- to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
- to make and give effect to such arrangements as are appropriate, having regard to the nature of his activities and the size of his undertaking, for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures.

*

Don't just concentrate on the largest staff group, others may be stressed or may be affected by changes being made; otherwise you may just be moving the problem along to the next group!

Statistics 2016/17

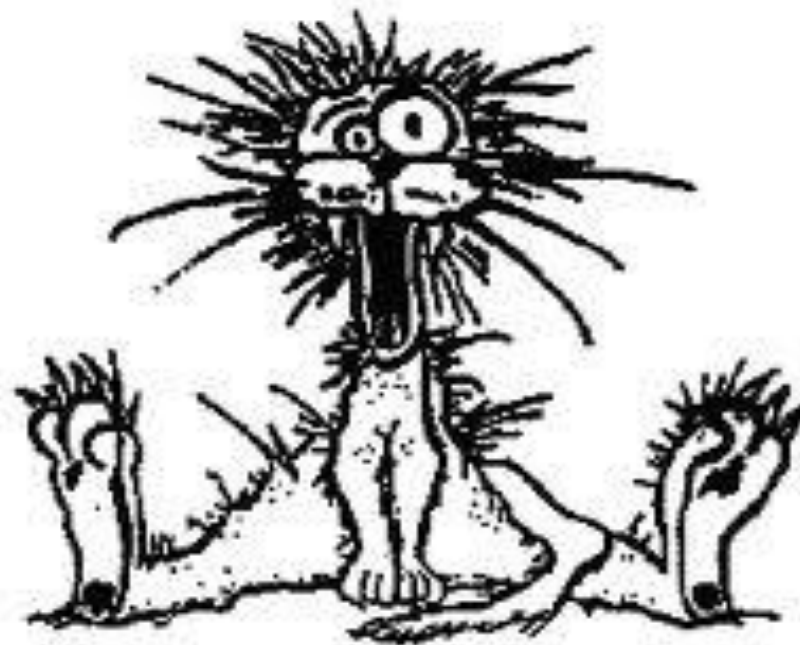
- 12.5 million days lost due to the condition (WRS, anxiety, depression) at an estimated cost of £5 billion to GB each year, with over £1billion costs to employers
- 526,000 self-reported cases, including 236,000 ‘new’ cases (started in last 12 months)
- 40% of all work-related ill-health cases
- 49% of all working days lost due to ill health.

Statistics 2016/17, *cont.*

- The public sector has the highest incidence of reported WRS, and will be a key target for HSE's plans. By occupation, jobs that are common in public service industries (such as health; teaching; finance and public service professionals) show higher levels of stress.
- The main work factors cited as causing work related stress were workload pressures, including tight deadlines and too much responsibility and a lack of managerial support.

Recognising stress

- Emotional
 - Tearful
 - Sensitive
 - Aggressive
- Mental
 - Confused
 - Poor memory
- Behavioural
 - Mood swings
 - Twitchy
 - Arriving later
 - Working longer



"STRESS"

Recognising stress, *cont.*

Stress can also happen in a team because one (or more) has problems and the others feel they are not pulling their weight or are receiving preferential treatment. This can appear as

- Disputes and disaffection
- More staff leaving
- more complaints and grievances
- More sickness absence and stress
- More poor performers
- Lack of co-operation
- Stressed line-manger



The HSE's Management Standards for Work-Related Stress approach



Using the Management Standards Work-Related Stress approach



1. Identify the stress risk factors – **understand the Management Standards**
2. Decide who may be harmed and how – **gather data e.g. surveys**
3. Evaluate the risks – **explore problems and develop solutions e.g. run focus groups and interviews**
4. Record your findings – **develop and implement action plans**
5. **Monitor and review action plan(s) and assess effectiveness**

The impact of stress

Stress has a significant impact on the individual and the team.

- Individuals
 - can have both their physical and mental health severely damaged
 - Can end up taking time of sick
 - Could lose their job
- Team
 - Can have its performance reduced becoming less effective
 - Can develop problems relating to support and relationship leading to animosity, rivalry etc.
 - Spread stress to others picking up the work the sufferer has left behind

Understand the Management Standards

The six areas are:

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns, and the work environment
- **Control:** How much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships:** promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

Positive action - Demands

- Develop personal work, development/training plans
- Ensure sufficient resources are available
- Adjust work patterns to cope with peak workloads and are flexible where possible
- Ensure your risk assessments for other hazards are up to date and reviewed such as the risk of violence and verbal abuse – do you have steps to deal with it or provide a system for reporting incidents

Positive action - Control

- Enable staff to have a say over the way their work is organised
- Provide opportunities for discussion and input during the planning stage of projects
- Allocate responsibility to teams rather than individuals
- Talk about the way decisions are made, is there scope for more involvement?

Positive action - Support

- Hold regular one-to-one meetings which include ‘work-related stress/pressures’ as a standing item
- Ask people how they want to be supported by managers or colleagues
- Develop training and refresher sessions to ensure competencies are up to date and appropriate for all the employees’ tasks.
- Talk about ways the organisation could provide support if someone is experiencing problems outside work.

Positive action - Role

- Ensure individuals are clear about their role and how they fit into the team and organisation
- Introduce or revise job descriptions and personal work plans to ensure core functions and priorities are clear.
- Display team/department targets and objectives to help clarify unit and individual role.
- Agree specific standards of performance for tasks and review periodically.

Positive action - Change

- Ensure all staff are aware of why the change is happening and how it will impact on them
- Ensure employee consultation and support is included as a key element of the change programme.
- Establish a system to communicate new developments, agreeing methods of communication and frequency.
- Review unit and individual work plans after the change to ensure they remain clear and achievable and identify any additional training needs

Positive action - Relationships



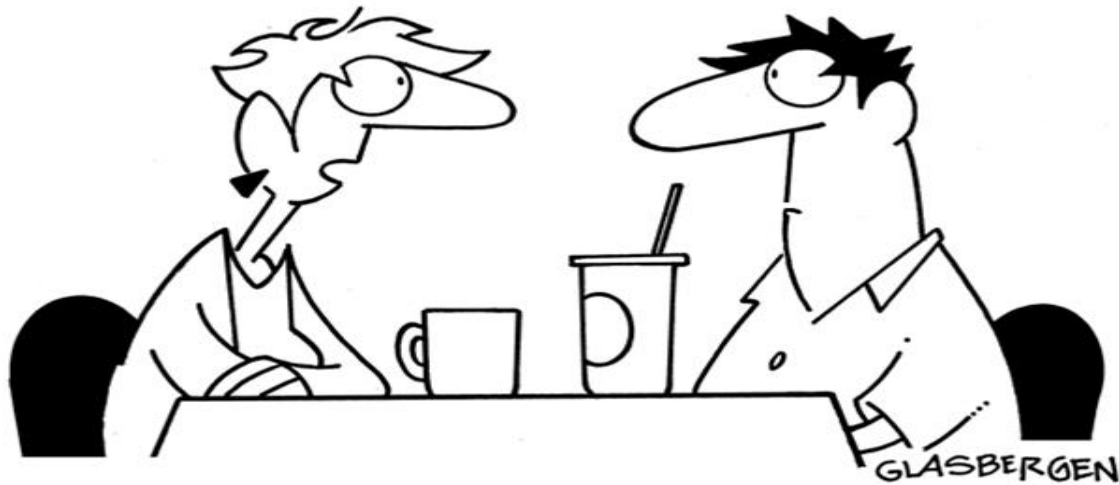
- Develop a written policy for reporting and dealing with unacceptable behaviour at work – communicate this to staff.
- Agree and implement procedures to prevent, or quickly resolve, conflict at work – communicate this to staff.
- Provide training to help staff deal with and defuse difficult situations.
- Discuss how individuals work together and how they can build positive relationships.

Support that's available

- Internal - usually
 - HR Support
 - Managing Attendance Policies
 - Bullying, harassment and other disciplinary policies
 - Occupational Health provisions
 - Employee Assistance Programme
- External
 - HSE
 - Work Related Stress (WRS) approach
 - Management competency tool
 - Consultancy and training services
 - Acas bullying and harassment guidance
 - EHRC and EASS advice on equality and equal rights issues

Questions

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**"I guess things have been kind of stressful at the office.
Tomorrow is Bring Your Therapist To Work Day."**





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